

**CITY of  
SPRINGFIELD**



April 19, 1999

Mr. George H. Paul, President  
Finkbiner Transfer & Storage Co.  
513 W. Olive  
Springfield, Mo 65806

Dear Mr. Paul:

Due to the release of an unknown volume of gasoline into the City sanitary sewer in the vicinity, you may have been experiencing gasoline odors or vapors entering your premises at 513 W. Olive by way of a plumbing connection to the City sanitary sewer. Proper authorities were made aware of the situation and an investigation was conducted to determine the source of the gasoline odors and to address the current conditions.

The fact that these odors or vapors may have entered your building as a result of your private sewer line being connected to the City sanitary sewer is of great concern to us. Regardless of the current situation involving gasoline odors, it appears that the condition of your private sewer plumbing could allow unwanted gases, vapors, and odors to enter your premises. At any given time, there may be a number of dangerous gases present in a City sanitary sewer that can present potentially serious health and safety hazards to you and the occupants at this location. These potentially dangerous gases are a part of the natural process of the decomposition of organic matter. Obviously, the organic matter that is present in the City sanitary sewer is there by design. The City sanitary sewer system is intended for the disposal of human and other wastes and acts as a conveyance of those wastes to the wastewater treatment plant where it is properly treated and clean water is released into area streams.

There are, of course, many other substances that can be present in the City sanitary sewer. Liquid wastes may be produced by wet-process industries or commercial establishments. Industrial and commercial wastewaters vary greatly in both quantity and pollutorial capacity such that it is impossible to assign fixed values to their common constituents. Some of these wastes may be legally discharged into the City sewer system when they are sufficiently pretreated or provided the volume is small with respect to the normal sewage flow. On occasion, other substances, raw materials, bulk liquids, off-specification products, date expired chemicals, etc. have been either released accidentally or improperly disposed of by industries or commercial establishments. Many individuals have improperly disposed of left-over household chemical products by pouring them down a drain at their private residence.

*513 W. Olive*

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

840 BOONVILLE AVENUE, P.O. BOX 8368 SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI 65801-8368

(417) 864-1900

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In summary, private sewer plumbing which is in good repair and meeting local plumbing codes is designed to prevent gases or vapors that may be present in the City Sanitary sewer system from venting back into the building. The gasoline odors may have entered the building because of the sewer vent pipe from the office toilets which opens into the warehouse instead of being vented through the warehouse roof to the outside, a faulty wax seal on a toilet, a broken pipe or connection, etc. Any drain that has not had water running through it for some period of time may not protect the premises due to the water seal having evaporated between the sewer and the occupied indoor space. Some water seals are visible and used frequently; such as the water that remains in the bottom of a toilet stool or in the drain under a kitchen sink. By looking under a sink one can observe the waste piping actually reversing direction to form a water seal or trap. Other water seals or traps may be hidden under floors or inside walls or used infrequently. Put simply, no water, no seal, no protection. Infrequently used drains or traps should have a gallon or more of water poured down them periodically so that the trap or seal can serve to prevent sewer gases and vapors from entering a building structure. After pouring water into a dried out drain or trap, by adding a small amount of mineral oil to the drain or trap may help to keep the water from evaporating so quickly in the future.

The conditions discussed above indicates that some plumbing deficiencies may exist in the building and that steps should be taken to correct the problem. Should you have any further questions you may call the City wastewater utility at 864-1923. Any questions regarding the condition or repair of your private sewer plumbing should be directed to the City Department of Building Development Services at 864-1056. Any questions or concerns relating to personal health or exposures may be directed to the Springfield/Greene County Health Department at 864-1658.

Sincerely yours,



Robert E. Corson, R.S.

Pretreatment Inspector

Industrial Pretreatment Program

cc: Pam Buck, Director of Building Development Services  
Bob Schaefer, Assistant Director of Public Works  
Ed Malter, Superintendent of Sanitary Services  
Randy Lyman, Pretreatment Coordinator  
Jim Fry, Health Department  
Bill Baker, Battalion Chief, Fire Department  
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STATE OF MISSOURI  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Mel Carnahan, Governor • Stephen M. Mahfood, Director

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Southwest Regional Office

2040 W. Woodland Springfield, MO 65807-5912

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April 16, 1999

Mr. Ed Patrick  
Morris Oil Company  
5353 South Campbell  
Springfield, MO 65807

Dear Mr. Patrick:

This is concerning the April 15, 1999, release of petroleum products into the municipal sewerage system from the 513 West Olive location in Springfield, Missouri. I spoke with Mr. Ron Ussery at the site and on the telephone regarding the incident.


Mr. Ussery advised that petroleum products from the gas pump hoses had been released into a drain in the building and that upon unplugging the drain, the product and water flowed into the sewers. This caused explosive levels of vapors in the sewerage system and most likely constituted an illegal release of hazardous wastes into the system. The drain was clogged at the time of my site visit but was later cleaned out by an environmental contractor and the water and product removed and handled as a hazardous waste.

Mr. Ussery also indicated the company will take the appropriate measures to prevent further improper releases or disposal of product from the lines during their removal from the pumps. This product, unless reusable in its intended use, will become a hazardous waste and must be handled as such and not released into the environment or the municipal sewerage system.

Your cooperation in these matters will be appreciated. If you have any questions, please advise.

Sincerely,

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL OFFICE



Charles L. Kroeger, Chief  
Air and Land Section

c: Mr. Randy Lyman, Springfield Sanitary Services  
Mr. Kent Turner, Springfield Fire Department